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Sudan: Problems and Prospects for the New Civilian Regime

Special National Intelligence Estimate

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SNIE 78-86

SUDAN: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS FOR THE NEW CIVILIAN REGIME

Information available as of 20 March 1986 was used in the preparation of this Estimate, which was approved on that date by the National Foreign Intelligence Board.

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SCOPE NOTE

This Special National Intelligence Estimate on Sudan is based on the assumption that the elections scheduled for April will take place and that a civilian government will take power. The Estimate focuses on the prospects for the survival of the new government over the next 12 months. Emphasis is given to the economic, military, and political problems that confront Khartoum, the external dimension that bears on these problems, alternative domestic outcomes, and their implications for the United States.

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KEY JUDGMENTS

We believe that Sudan's soon-to-be-elected civilian government, most likely led by Sadiq al-Mahdi, may muddle through for almost a year but that there is a better-than-even chance that it will not remain in power much beyond that period. The new government's longevity will depend on how it manages five key problem areas:

- Endemic political factionalism in Khartoum.
- The status of Islam.
- Continuing deterioration of the economy.
- An expanding southern insurgency.
- The questionable loyalty of the security forces.

In our judgment, the new civilian government will not be able to address these problems effectively. We believe that, after a grace period of several months, the cumulative effects of these problems will begin to destabilize it. []

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Sadiq is probably Sudan's most experienced and skilled politician. He probably can expect a brief honeymoon in the first few months after the elections while he forms a national coalition government likely to include the left and southerners but possibly excluding the Muslim Brotherhood. Most civilian elites in Khartoum want the Army out of politics and support a democratic form of government, and the Army probably would prefer to see a civilian government confront Sudan's intractable problems for a time—keeping open the option to return to power. []

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A civilian coalition government is unlikely to maintain the necessary cohesion or discipline for effective leadership and will probably suffer from the factional infighting and petty, personal squabbles characteristic of the past. In the freer political climate in Sudan, the new government probably will be hard pressed to maintain stability in the north if infighting among party factions spills over into armed conflict or if ethnic and regional groups disgruntled over the outcome of elections initiate sabotage in Khartoum. []

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The status of Islam in Sudan could develop into a bitter and even violent controversy. Northern Muslim political groups, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, will be militantly in favor of an Islamic constitution, but southerners, other non-Muslims, and the left will demand a secular one. []

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Sudan's economic outlook is bleak. Acute shortages of goods and spiraling inflation will almost certainly lead to further labor unrest. A vicious cycle has already begun—of escalating demands by unions for higher wages followed by government concessions that entail further monetary expansion. With the government unable to provide any real increase in purchasing power, crippling strikes and work stoppages are likely to become an endemic feature of the Sudanese landscape in the year ahead. Such unrest will further debilitate an already prostrate economy and offer radical elements an issue to exploit. It will also be a factor in heightening intercommunal violence. []

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Prospects for resolving Sudan's international payments crisis are extremely bleak in the aftermath of the IMF decision declaring Khartoum ineligible to use the Fund's resources. Foreign donors, moreover, will probably not repay Sudan's arrears to the IMF in the likely absence of a sound economic reform program. The new government will probably remain mired in the traditional statist approach to resolving economic issues, and many donors will probably reduce balance-of-payments support, a move that will have a further adverse impact on Sudan's politically sensitive public-sector economy. []

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The Ethiopian-backed insurgency in southern Sudan poses a major challenge for the new government. The rebel force—15,000 to 20,000 strong—is growing and controls much of the southern countryside. The rebels will probably intensify attacks—possibly even carry out sabotage in the north—to maintain pressure on the new government to meet their constitutional demands. Meanwhile, Khartoum's efforts to acquire arms—even if successful—and reinforce southern garrisons are not likely to improve its military position. Khartoum's severe logistic problems, supply shortages, and military defeats will continue to lower morale and foster desertions of the undermanned and underequipped government combat units. []

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Resolution of the southern conflict probably will not be possible for the new government in the next year. Even if Khartoum holds a constitutional conference after the elections, meeting southern rebel demands will prove difficult, and prospects for meaningful negotiations will remain poor. Consequently, the insurgency is likely to remain a severe drain on Sudan's already limited economic reserves, a serious strain on the Army's unity and loyalty, and a stimulus for Khartoum to seek new arms suppliers. []

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The civilian government will pursue a neutral foreign policy because Sudan's civilian parties from the left to the Muslim Brotherhood favor nonalignment. In its search to enhance sources of economic aid and undercut support to the rebels, the government will maintain good relations with Libya, seek improved ties to Ethiopia, and hope to

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acquire some aid from the Soviet Union. Khartoum will still expect continued military and economic support from the United States, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, even though it is less able or willing to support many of the regional goals of these traditional allies. []

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The new government will continue the rapprochement begun with Libya last year in order to deny Libyan support to southern insurgents, to obtain Libyan economic and military aid, and to try to keep Libyan subversive machinations within some bounds. A Sadiq government will follow the interim government's pattern of acceding to some Libyan demands but attempt to evade Libyan efforts to ally Sudan formally with Libya. The new government will sign additional agreements with Libya, welcome Libyan military support, and avoid acts that would provoke Qadhafi, such as providing support to Libyan dissidents or acceding to closer military cooperation with the United States or Egypt.

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Overall, Libyan influence in Khartoum will probably increase over the next year in direct proportion to the supply of Libyan military and economic assistance. Libyan military support for the Sudanese Army's counterinsurgency efforts—which may well become Sudan's most significant source of such aid—will offer the Libyans further access to the Sudanese military for proselytizing and subversion, as well as influence with the new government. In the short term this will be partially offset by traditional anti-Libyan sentiments of much of the Sudanese officer corps and conservative religious and political factions. Libyan heavyhandedness also could provoke resentments and stimulate coup plotting by conservative Army officers. We cannot rule out, however, a Libyan effort to sponsor mob or terrorist attacks against the US or Egyptian presence in Sudan despite continued good relations with Khartoum. []

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The Army—especially the younger generals and unit commanders—would be likely to move to take over in the event of civil unrest, parliamentary paralysis, or a series of major defeats in the south. Few of the more senior officers are personally loyal to Sadiq al-Mahdi and probably even fewer are committed to a multiparty democracy. In the meantime, the police and civilian intelligence services have neither the capability nor loyalty to the Sadiq government that could prevent a military takeover []

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If, as we expect, the new civilian government fails to address Sudan's economic and political problems in a meaningful way, a crisis atmosphere will probably develop later this year. The likelihood of a move by Army officers to take power will increase by early next year. The most likely group to act will be a coalition of conservative young

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generals and colonels. While we cannot rule out plotting by junior officers, we see a successful coup from this group as much less likely.

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As the civilian government loses control, two other outcomes are possible but considerably less likely. A weakened civilian government could fully accede to insurgent leader Garang's demands for a fundamental restructuring of the political system. Such a move would probably be supported by leftist and non-Arab and non-Muslim factions but resisted by northern Muslim elites and much of the officer corps. Alternatively, a weakened civilian government could break down into contending armed factions—a situation reminiscent of Lebanon—with none of them strong enough to impose a firm new national government. Such an outcome would lead to the breakup of the security forces into their ethnic and religious component parts. The latter outcome would be seriously damaging to regional stability and injurious to US interests.

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The United States will probably face similar problems with either a Sadiq-led civilian government or a conservative military regime:

- Either would look to the United States for continued economic assistance but will be unable (and probably unwilling) to make comprehensive economic reforms.
- Either would press the United States for military help in combating the southern insurgency but would also accept military help from virtually any other source, including Libya and the USSR. On the other hand, Libyan economic and military ties could probably be reduced or eliminated—and Soviet ties preempted—should Sudan's traditional partners respond to Khartoum's perceived military and economic needs.
- Neither will be prepared to resume the level of military cooperation associated with the Nimeiri regime. Combined military exercises will be unlikely, and the pre-positioning agreement will be held in abeyance.

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A successor military government run by younger generals or colonels could provide Sudan with stability in the short run. Such a government might be strong enough to make hard decisions on the economy and the south. These officers would probably have greater incentive to end the war than most other groups in Sudan, and might show greater unity and flexibility in negotiating an end to the insurgency than an elected government hobbled by infighting and the demands of its northern Muslim constituents. We doubt that insurgent leader Garang would move quickly to deal with a new military regime, however, no matter how conciliatory it appeared.

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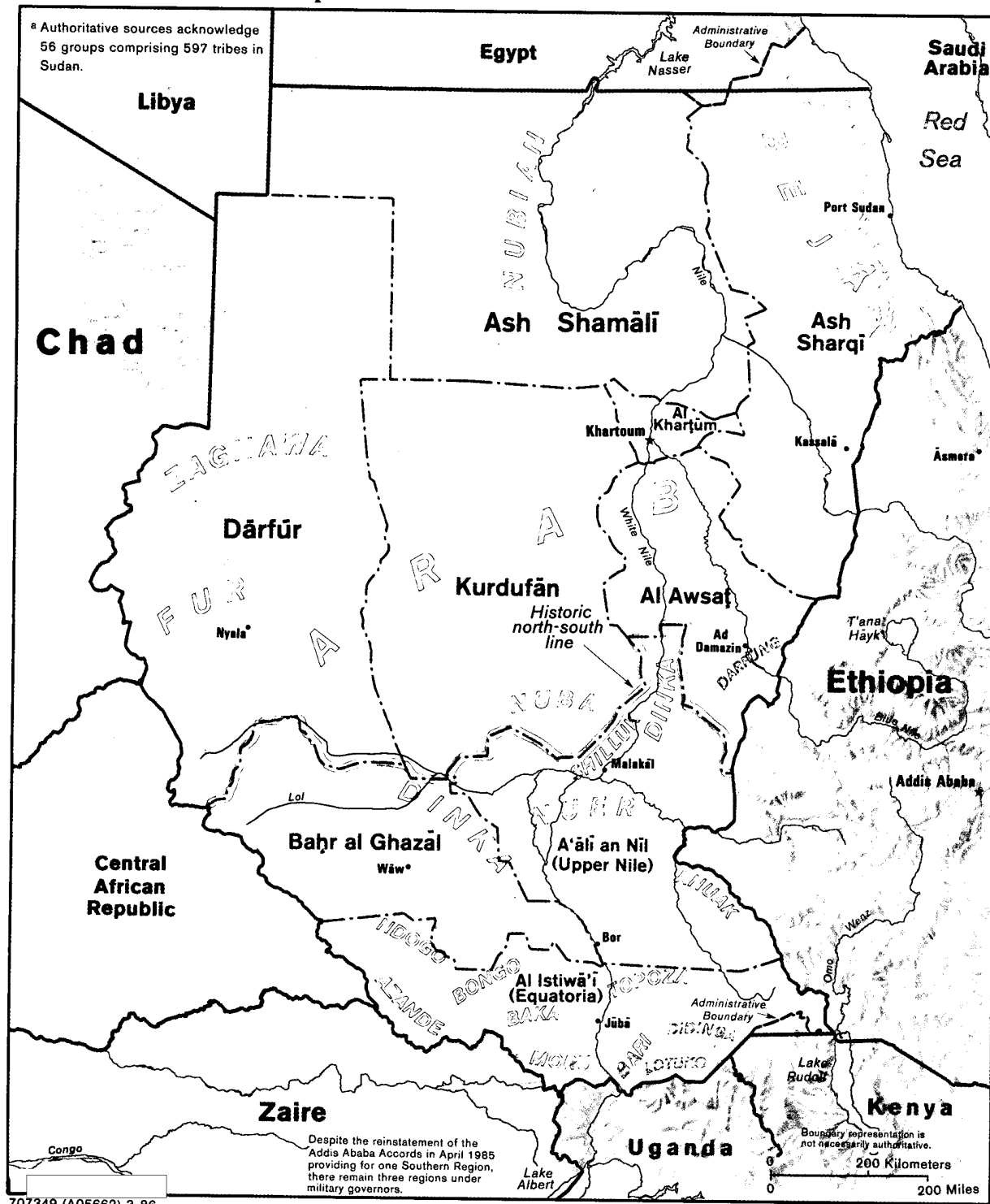
A military regime, however, would pose an additional problem for the United States in that its restoration of order would probably involve detentions and suppression of at least some political parties. This would create a human and civil rights problem for the United States despite an apparent increase in public order.

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Figure 1
Selected Sudanese Tribal Groups^a



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DISCUSSION

1. Khartoum's ruling military leaders seem determined to honor their promise of national elections early next month and the installation of a civilian government. (See inset.) The senior officers who deposed President Nimeiri last year have brought Sudan greater political freedom but not stability. The interim military regime leaves a grim legacy for the new civilian government: over the past year the economy has deteriorated, the Ethiopian-backed insurgency in the south has grown, the relationship of Islam to the state remains unresolved, and the prospect of internal and external subversion has increased. The survival of the ruling Military Council and its civilian cabinet is the result of divisions among their opponents and their promise of a turnover to civilian rule. []

2. We expect the elections to take place, barring a major crisis such as assassination of a key politician,

massive civil unrest, or a disastrous defeat of the government's forces in the south. Most civilian elites want the Army out of politics and the establishment of a more democratic form of government. The Army wants time to reorganize itself and prefers to see an elected civilian government confront the massive economic and political problems facing Sudan, while maintaining the option of again intervening should the new government fail to address these problems. []

3. In our judgment, the Umma Party—which represents the largest northern Muslim sect, the Ansar—is likely to win a plurality and its leader, Sadiq al-Mahdi, will most likely be named prime minister. The Democratic Unionist Party—with roots in Sudan's second-largest northern Muslim sect, the Khatmiyyah—probably will place second. Of the radical parties, the Muslim Brotherhood's political party—the National Islamic Front—probably will do best, possibly coming in third. Most of the major regional and ethnic parties that oppose elections before a national conference are probably not united or well enough organized to make a significant showing, although they nonetheless plan to field candidates []

The Constitutional Framework of the New Government

The interim constitution approved by Sudan's military and civilian leaders in late 1985 outlined a political timetable for the transfer to civilian rule and the creation of a permanent constitution over the next four years. The "Constituent Assembly," which is to be elected early next month, will have 301 seats, of which 28 are set aside for university-educated professionals; the remainder are based on geographic districts. Elections are to take place from 1 to 12 April, and the winners are to be announced on 16 April. The assembly's first session is scheduled for 26 April. []

The assembly is to choose a five-man "Sovereignty Council" to act as head of state (including having command of the armed forces) and to select a prime minister, who in turn will select a cabinet. []

The assembly will be expected to draft and adopt a constitution within nine months, thereafter turning itself into a parliament to sit for three years and carry out its duties as stated in the new, permanent constitution. If elections cannot take place throughout the south, however, the government will suspend work on the new constitution and continue to operate under the interim constitution until all southerners can elect representatives to the assembly. This could take several years. []

Key Problem Areas

4. We believe the stability and even the survivability of the new civilian government depend on the interplay of five key problem areas. These are:

- Political factionalism in Khartoum.
- The relationship between Islam and the state.
- The course of the southern insurgency.
- The growing economic crisis.
- The loyalty of the security forces.

Political Factionalism in Khartoum

5. To undercut opposition to his leadership, Sadiq will attempt to form a government of national unity,

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probably including the left and southerners but possibly excluding the Muslim Brotherhood. Probably the greatest challenge to the survival of parliamentary government in the next year is whether the parties can maintain effective leadership and avoid the factional infighting and petty, personal squabbles characteristic of the past.¹ []

6. Sadiq has the political skills and flexibility needed for domestic coalition-building. (See inset.) He will try to limit opportunities for domestic rivals to become surrogates for external actors such as Egypt and Libya by maintaining a balanced foreign policy with the two neighbors. He will also adopt traditional economic approaches favoring the public sector, resisting economic reforms that could ignite civil unrest. Most important, he will try to keep the support of the Army, in which Muslim religious sects are heavily represented: the Ansar in the enlisted ranks and the Khatmiyyah in the officer corps. Sadiq will attempt a balancing act between southerners and northern Muslims by repealing Nimeiri's harsh Islamic laws while making traditional statements in support of an Islamic state and pledging to maintain the Islamic-law aspects of the constitution. []

7. Nonetheless, party factional and personal rivalries are likely to reemerge within the Umma Party and among members of the coalition. Sadiq, who has wide foreign financial support, including Libyan, may face challenges from rivals within his own party—for example, Wali al-Din evidently has a loyal paramilitary group developed and funded in exile by Libya. The Egyptian-supported Democratic Unionist Parties—the political arm of the Khatmiyyah sect, led by Muhammad al-Mirghani [] will probably make an unreliable coalition partner and will probably refragment into three parties, each pursuing divergent political alliances. []

8. The Muslim Brotherhood will pose a major problem for the new government if Sadiq fails to make a commitment to an Islamic state. The Brotherhood, which will run in elections as the National Islamic Front under the leadership of charismatic Hassan al-Turabi [] receives funding from private donors in Saudi Arabia, from Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, and, according to some reports, from Iran. It is well organized, attracts a large number of students and professionals, and has its own militia. The Muslim Brotherhood has recruited military officers in key units (including the airborne battalions) and retains the

Sadiq al-Mahdi

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Sadiq al-Mahdi combines political and religious leadership as head of the Umma Party and imam of the Ansar sect. While he exploits the symbolic significance of his position as the great-grandson of the Mahdi, he also presents himself as a reasonable, democratic, and progressive leader. A master of short-term coalition politics, he has at various times made alliances with groups of almost every ideological orientation, from the Communists to the Muslim Brotherhood. He has, however, consistently refused to compromise his attachment to Islamic values, arguing publicly that Islam is a crucial element of Sudan's national identity. []

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Sadiq, who is 50, received a degree in economics with honors from Oxford University in the late 1950s. He served as Prime Minister from July 1966 until the following May. During most of 1970-78 he was in exile or imprisoned. In 1976, with Libyan support, he orchestrated a nearly successful coup against President Nimeiri. Sadiq reconciled with Nimeiri in 1978, but was jailed in September 1983 for criticizing the President's Islamic laws. He was released from prison in late 1984 after agreeing to refrain from opposition activity. []

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sympathy of a number of officers who share its hardline views toward the south. If frozen out of a ruling coalition or unable to make a private understanding with Sadiq, the Muslim Brotherhood will probably work to remove the new government. It

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¹ Since independence in 1956 Sudan has had only seven years of parliamentary democracy; 11 months is the longest any one government survived in the last parliamentary period, in the 1960s. []

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would employ several strategies, including enticing a faction of the Democratic Unionists into leaving the government, inducing or taking advantage of civil unrest, or plotting to gain power through a coup led by sympathetic officers [redacted]

9. The National Alliance of unions and political parties—led by professionals, including some leftists, who last April spearheaded Nimeiri's overthrow with a general strike—has little popular support and is likely to lose its importance as a civilian lobby after the elections. Nonetheless, student, professional, and labor groups in Khartoum were the major catalysts in bringing down governments in 1964 and 1985 and probably would again initiate civil unrest in the event of food and fuel shortages or price hikes, which are likely in the next year. The radical parties will exploit labor grievances. [redacted]

10. Among the other parties, we expect the Sudanese Communists, led by Ibrahim Nuqud [redacted] to enter a Sadiq-led coalition while at the same time working clandestinely to destabilize the government; funded by the East Germans, the Soviets, and possibly the Ethiopians, the Sudanese Communist Party lacks popular support but is well organized and also has a militia. The Iraqi- and Syrian-backed Ba'th Parties, which may join the Sadiq coalition through alignment with the Communists or Democratic Unionists, have almost no popular support but have the sympathy of some military officers because of their Pan-Arab ideology. The Libyan-backed and -armed Sudanese Revolutionary Committees will probably not be invited to join the new government; they are small, unpopular, and badly divided but nonetheless pose a potential subversive threat in Khartoum. [redacted]

11. The Sudan Rural Solidarity, a loose coalition of 14 ethnic and regional parties and labor groups (seven southern, one western, four eastern, and two Nuban) has argued that elections should be postponed until a national conference resolves such major constitutional questions as the status of both Islam and the south. Nonetheless, it is participating in the election. Solidarity members have traditionally been on the periphery of Sudanese politics and claim to share many of the goals of southern rebel leader John Garang. (See inset.) The major moderate southern parties in Solidarity will probably make pragmatic coalitions with the traditional northern parties after the elections, but the more radical Nubans would pose a major subversive threat if they reject the validity of the election results. Elements of this coalition, especially the Nubans, will continue to engage in plotting and clandestine collaboration with southern insurgents. [redacted]

John Garang



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Col. John Garang—since 1983 head of both the Sudanese People's Liberation Army and its political wing—is widely regarded as having excellent leadership skills. He was on home leave in Bor when southern Army mutineers drafted him as the leader of their rebel movement. We believe Garang is a nationalist and most likely an African-style socialist. His speeches have consistently stressed national goals and emphasized that the south's problems with neglect and exploitation by the central government are shared by all regions outside Khartoum. He views the creation of a federal system with extensive regional autonomy as the solution to rule by "a minority Arab clique" that he believes is largely responsible for Sudan's massive economic and political problems. [redacted]

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Garang, 40, is a Dinka tribesman and reportedly a staunch Baptist who attended high school in Tanzania, where he probably was introduced to socialism. In 1969 he graduated from Grinnell College in Iowa with honors in economics. He fought with the Anya Nya southern rebels during the last few months of the civil war that ended in 1972 and thereafter joined the Sudanese Army. He attended the Infantry Officers Advanced Course in the United States in 1974 and later enrolled at Iowa State University, where he received a doctoral degree in economics in 1981. Before going to the bush, Garang served in the Army's research branch in the capital and taught development planning at the University of Khartoum [redacted]

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The Islamic Factor

12. The status of Islam in Sudan is likely to be one of the most controversial and divisive issues facing the new government. The Islamic laws declared by former

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President Nimeiri in September 1983 remain intact under the interim regime, which liberalized application of the laws but has left their final disposition to the elected civilian government. As prime minister, Sadiq—whom Nimeiri imprisoned for opposing his Islamic laws—will probably encounter limited northern opposition to the suspension of the September laws, which many believe are too harsh, inconsistent, and non-Islamic. The constitutional status of Islamic law could develop, however, into a bitter and even violent controversy. Northern Muslim political groups, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, will be militantly in favor of an Islamic constitution, but southerners, other non-Muslims, and the left will demand a secular one. []

The Southern Insurgency

13. The southern problem will pose a major challenge to the survival of the new government, just as it undermined the Nimeiri regime. The roots of the rebellion in southern Sudan can be found in the fundamental ethnic, linguistic, and religious divisions between the Muslim Arabs of the north—who dominate the central government—and the animists and Christians of the south, who identify with their black African heritage. The Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) is the major southern rebel group. It is backed by Ethiopia and, until Khartoum's rapprochement with Tripoli last year, had received support from Libya. It has rapidly expanded to number at least 15,000 men—perhaps as many as 20,000—under the command of former Sudanese Army Col. John Garang, and it is likely to keep growing. []

14. Overall, the insurgents have become an effective fighting force that operates in all three southern provinces, makes occasional probes into adjacent northern provinces, cuts off road and rail links to the south, and controls much of the southern countryside. In contrast, the 14,000 to 16,000 government troops in the south, who are poorly equipped and supplied and thinly deployed and who suffer from low morale, are vulnerable to direct attacks. (see annex A.) []

15. Garang claims to seek a secular, unified, democratic, federal, and socialist Sudan. His preconditions for dialogue late last year included Khartoum's public agreement to a constitutional conference that would choose a new interim government, to the repeal of Nimeiri's Islamic laws, and to the suspension of external agreements with Egypt and Libya. The Sadiq government may convene a constitutional conference if, as expected, Garang prevents voting in much of the south and thereby blocks work on the new constitution

in the elected assembly. Even if a constitutional conference were to convene, however, a successful outcome would be unlikely because of continued fighting, the widely divergent agendas of participants, friction over controversial issues such as the constitutional status of Islam and a federal government structure, and the strong prospect that the rebels might not attend or would walk out. []

16. Even if a national conference adopts a federal system, a major demand of the rebels, Khartoum will find a political settlement with the south arduous to negotiate. Equatorians, for example, would reject any governmental structure that allowed the more numerous Nilotic tribes from Bahr al Ghazal and Upper Nile to dominate the political process in the southern region (see figure 1, page 8); last year they opposed the interim regime's reinstatement of the south's legal status as one region. At the core of any settlement with the rebels will be difficult negotiations providing constitutional guarantees that the south will not be forced to adopt Islamic law and formal agreements regarding revenue sharing from development projects. []

17. Khartoum's efforts to acquire arms and reinforce southern garrisons, even if successful, are not likely to improve its military position significantly. Severe logistic problems, supply shortages, and Khartoum's inability to absorb new weapon systems will continue to impede operational effectiveness, lower morale, and foster desertions. These problems are likely to be compounded when the rainy season begins just before the elections. By the end of 1986 the SPLA will probably reduce the central government's presence in the south to several besieged garrisons and declare much of the south a "liberated zone." []

18. Resolution of the southern conflict, therefore, will not be easy and will probably not be possible for the new government in the next year. Fighting will probably intensify whether or not a dialogue takes place between Khartoum and the rebels. Both sides are likely to violate cease-fires as each tries to improve its position by achieving military superiority. There is a danger that Khartoum will be tempted by opportunity or necessity to try to force a military solution. At the same time, Ethiopian determination to support the rebels and the strong likelihood that Garang will receive assistance from Zaire, Uganda, and Kenya will enhance insurgent prospects. []

19. In our judgment, the continuation of the insurgency will place an increasingly severe drain on Sudan's already limited economic reserves, preventing the return of foreign personnel needed to develop oil and water resources in the south, straining financial

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resources, and discouraging foreign creditors and investors. The political stability and even territorial integrity of Sudan will be seriously challenged by the insurgency, especially if disgruntled northern ethnic and regional groups join the southern rebels. More important, the southern conflict will increasingly strain the Army's unity and morale and will heighten the prospect that the new civilian government will be overthrown by an Army coup. []

Economic Problems and Prospects

20. If, as seems likely, the new government remains mired in the traditional statist approach to resolving economic issues and evades pressures for economic reform and privatization of the economy, many donors will probably reduce balance-of-payments support. Largely for political and humanitarian reasons, most major donors will probably continue to disburse bilateral financial aid, but at levels lower than in 1984-85. The quantity and type of aid will probably be influenced, however, by the level of commitment the new regime gives to economic reform. On the other hand, project assistance, such as aid for specific infrastructural development, will probably continue irrespective of Sudanese economic policies. (See table.) []

21. Reduced levels of balance-of-payments support are likely to play havoc with Sudan's public sector. Those components of the economy dependent on government funding—for example, government payrolls, subsidies, and parastatals—will experience little, if any, real growth over the next year and may even be subjected to substantial cutbacks. Nevertheless, the government will probably attempt to support these politically sensitive public outlays by inflating the domestic money supply in order to meet governmental and parastatal expenses. Moreover, the new govern-

Sudan: Selected Economic Indicators

GDP growth, 1985	-7%
Inflation rate, 1985-86	50%
Total foreign debt	\$9 billion
Foreign exchange reserve (excluding gold), January 1986	\$8.8 million
Foreign debt service obligation 1985-86	\$2.8 billion
Debt service ratio, 1985-86	303%

ment's desperation to generate additional financial resources will probably trigger additional controls over the private sector. The free (or parallel) economy, fueled largely by remittance earnings from Sudanese working abroad, until recently constituted one of the few remaining robust sectors of the Sudanese economy. []

22. Acute shortages of goods and spiraling inflation will almost certainly lead to further labor unrest. A vicious cycle of escalating demands by unions for higher wages followed by government concessions that entail further monetary expansion has already begun and will continue. With the government unable to provide any real increase in purchasing power, crippling strikes and work stoppages are likely to become an endemic feature in Sudan in the year ahead. Such unrest will further debilitate an already prostrate economy and provide an important source of political unrest. []

23. Sudan's bleak economic outlook is also likely to force the new regime to consider increased reliance on barter arrangements with Libya and Soviet Bloc countries. Libya has already provided 300,000 metric tons of oil as an outright gift as well as other goods; similar deals, possibly in exchange for a share of Sudanese remittance earnings, are possible. Sudan's relatively large cotton crop also provides a potential opportunity for barter with Bloc countries that may be willing, for political reasons, to absorb less than prime-quality merchandise. While we do not believe that the Soviet Bloc can ultimately provide the food, capital, and technology that Sudan desperately needs, the opportunity for limited economic inroads certainly exists and probably will be exploited. []

24. Prospects for resolving Sudan's international payments crisis are extremely bleak in the aftermath of the recent IMF decision to declare Khartoum ineligible to use Fund resources. Sudan's foreign exchange earning capacity almost certainly will remain inadequate to service either international debt obligations or critical import requirements. Nor are foreign donors likely to repay Sudan's arrears to the IMF—which will approach \$400 million by the end of 1986—in the absence of a sound economic adjustment program. []

25. Khartoum will be increasingly likely to steer away from any systematic attempt to grapple with debt repayment or economic reform. Paris and London Club debt rescheduling exercises will largely become irrelevant as Sudan's capability and willingness to service even minimal loan requirements disappear. Sudanese officials will probably repay only those

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creditors, private and governmental, willing to provide fresh funds. Such an approach will do little damage to Khartoum's already abysmal credit rating and will, in effect, amount to a de facto unilateral moratorium on most public international debt. []

The Loyalty of the Security Forces

26. Historically, the military has been the key pillar of support for Sudanese regimes, and the newly elected government will need the military's acceptance and backing to survive even for the remainder of the year. Most of the military and police forces have supported the interim regime and have been generally optimistic about the return to civilian rule. []

27. The most serious grievance of the military will probably remain the handling of the southern insurgency. Officers in particular will be concerned over the ethnic and regional divisions that have weakened the military. They believe that the failure to make headway in the south has lowered morale and increased discipline problems. []

28. Most of the officer corps currently blame poor military performance in the south on the incompetence and indecisiveness of their senior generals, including the generals on the interim government's ruling Military Council. The assumption of government by a civilian regime, however, combined with the anticipated retirement of several of the most senior officers, will shift some of the burden of performance to the new civilian leadership. Given that, in our judgment, the southern insurgency will incrementally grow over the next year and the government's fortunes continue to decline, a sense of dissatisfaction with and blame of the new civilian leadership will probably grow within the officer corps. These sentiments will stimulate afresh interest in a military takeover on the part of the more aggressive and frustrated unit commanders. While some new inputs of external military support can be expected for the armed forces—largely from the Libyans—these will probably not meet the perceived needs of the more competent and dynamic officers, deepening their sense of frustration with the civilian government. []

29. The role of Islam in Sudan will also remain a potentially explosive issue of concern to the military. Virtually all soldiers—Muslim and non-Muslim alike—were relieved by the ending of the excesses of Nimeiri's rule, but many are now apprehensive because the questions of Islamization and the status of Sharia (Islamic law) have yet to be addressed. []

30. Muslim officers are divided in their views of Islam. Many see Islamic law as an intrusion and a

constraint on their daily routine and lifestyle. Others realize Islamic law impedes reconciliation with the south and erodes the Army's cohesion, but they are emotionally and intellectually drawn to its tenets. We believe that the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood has penetrated the upper levels of the officer corps with greater success than any other radical group in recent years. []

31. For the foreseeable future, the large number of non-Muslims and non-Arabs in the Army—southerners, Nubans, and westerners—will be of concern to the Army's Muslim Arab senior officers from northern Sudan. An estimated 80 percent of the enlisted ranks in the Khartoum area are either non-Muslim or non-Arab, and about 40 percent of these are Nubans. The perception that the military hierarchy is incapable of caring for the wants and needs of non-Arab or non-Muslim soldiers is already widespread and will probably grow. Failure to exempt non-Muslim soldiers from Islamic law could lead to additional desertions, conspiracies, mutinies, and coup attempts. Nuban enlisted men participated in an abortive coup plot in October 1984 and were primarily behind a mutiny in Khartoum in September 1985. Increasing intercommunal tensions and violence will accelerate desertions and defections of non-Arab, non-Muslim officers and men. []

32. The traditional military reluctance to intervene in large-scale disturbances makes the loyalty and effectiveness of other security services keys to the new government's ability to withstand coup attempts and to control civil unrest. The Sudanese police organization has low morale, is poorly trained and equipped, and is held in low esteem by most Sudanese. The police will be unable to contain large-scale disturbances in Khartoum or elsewhere. []

The External Dimension

33. The new government will probably continue to pursue the nonaligned foreign policy established by the interim regime because Sudan's civilian parties from the left to the Muslim Brotherhood favor non-alignment. To enhance sources of economic aid and undercut support to the rebels, the new government will probably maintain the rapprochement with Libya, keep working for reconciliation with Ethiopia, and make additional efforts to improve ties to and seek aid from the Soviet Union. The new government will probably also expect continued military and economic aid from Sudan's US, Egyptian, and Saudi Arabian benefactors despite its decreased ability or willingness to support their regional goals. []

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34. Khartoum's nonalignment will probably initially have a basically moderate, pro-Western tilt, but Libyan and other radical states in the region will increase their efforts to wean Sudan's loyalties from the West. Khartoum will be hard pressed to resist such pressures to realign itself, especially if traditional allies fail to offer the economic and military aid it deems necessary for its survival. Meanwhile, the presence of radical Arab and Muslim groups with ties to Iraq, Syria, Iran, and Libya—as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization—will add external subversive elements to the tense political climate in Khartoum. []

Relations With Egypt and Saudi Arabia

35. Egypt has a major concern in keeping a friendly, stable government in Sudan that will be sympathetic to its interests—specifically, access to water from the Nile River. Bilateral relations have now stabilized after strains that developed last year over Sudan's rapprochement with Libya and popular Sudanese demands for the extradition of Nimeiri. The political and economic aspects of the Egyptian-Sudanese integration treaty of 1982 have been allowed to languish, but the mutual defense pact of 1976 remains in place. Egypt is helping the interim government rebuild its civilian intelligence organ. Although it has also tried to mediate between Ethiopia and the insurgents and Khartoum, Cairo has reluctantly sent small amounts of arms and ammunition to fight the rebels in response to Sudanese requests. []

36. Egypt is outwardly supportive of elections and probably believes that it can work with Sudan's new government, although it probably remains wary of Sadiq, whose party has traditionally opposed a strong Egyptian presence in Sudan. Egyptian President Mubarak wants to neutralize Libyan influence in Khartoum, but Cairo's own domestic problems and meager resources are likely to limit its ability to compete with Tripoli in Sudan. We believe that Cairo would prefer to remain indifferent to coup plotting in Sudan, but Egypt would become involved if Khartoum moves to align with Libya or if Sudan appears headed for prolonged instability that would invite Libyan interference. []

37. Saudi Arabia believes that the stability of Sudan is a factor in its own security and an important element in preventing expansion of Soviet influence in the region, but it has neither closely involved itself in Sudanese politics nor granted extensive aid to Sudan. Saudi leaders remain concerned, however, about Libyan intentions in Sudan and the prospects for increased Communist or other leftist influence. Although Riyadh

generally will support a Sadiq-led government, it will probably continue to avoid close or expensive involvement in Sudan, particularly given decreasing Saudi resources []

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The Libyan Rapprochement

38. The new government will continue the rapprochement begun with Libya last year in order to deny Libyan support to southern insurgents, to obtain Libyan economic and military aid, and to attempt to keep Libyan subversive machinations within some bounds. A Sadiq government will follow the interim government's pattern of acceding to some Libyan demands but attempt to evade Libyan efforts to ally Sudan formally with Libya. The new government will sign additional agreements with Libya, however, and avoid acts that would provoke Libyan leader Qadhafi, such as providing support to Libyan dissidents or acceding to closer military cooperation with the United States or Egypt. []

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39. For his part, Qadhafi will probably provide significant amounts of economic and military assistance to a Sadiq government in return for continued progress toward a closer relationship. He will deny new support to the southern insurgents as long as he sees the Sadiq government as meeting his minimum requirements for good relations. Qadhafi would be unlikely to turn against the new regime, even if it evades his attempts to unify Sudan with Libya, as long as Khartoum does not "backslide" on matters Tripoli considers vitally important. []

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40. Overall, Libyan influence in Khartoum will probably increase over the next year in direct proportion to the supply of Libyan military and economic assistance. Libyan military support for the Sudanese Army's counterinsurgency efforts will offer the Libyans further access to the Sudanese military for proselytizing and subversion as well as increased influence with the government. An increased Libyan military presence will also provide Tripoli some capability to intervene either for or against a military coup. In the short term this will be somewhat constrained by traditional anti-Libyan sentiments of much of the Sudanese officer corps and conservative political factions such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Moreover, Libyan heavyhandedness could provoke resentments and stimulate coup plotting by conservative Army officers. We cannot rule out, however, a Libyan effort to sponsor mob or terrorist attacks against the US or Egyptian presence in Sudan despite continued good relations with Khartoum. []

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The Soviet Union and Ethiopia

41. Moscow will probably continue its current dual-track approach in its dealings with the new government in Sudan in an effort to undermine or supplant US and other Western influence there. The Soviets have shown restraint in developing ties to the interim government. To date, they have shown some interest in developing economic relations, but they have stopped short of fulfilling Sudanese requests for military spare parts. Concurrently, Moscow has maintained close ties to the Sudanese Communist Party and provided indirect support to John Garang's southern dissidents through Ethiopia, Cuba, and East Germany.

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42. Moscow's attitude will depend on Khartoum's posture toward the United States, the USSR, and the local Sudanese Communists and on Khartoum's policies toward Ethiopia, Libya, and Egypt. Moscow will probably agree to provide some military support to the Sudanese Government, particularly if the Sudanese Communist Party is a coalition partner. We believe, however, given Soviet equities in the region—particularly in Ethiopia—that Moscow will proceed cautiously. If the elections lead to new tensions and instability, the Soviets would probably also discreetly step up support to the Sudanese Communists and to Garang's forces, in the hope of promoting anti-Western sentiment and leftist influence in any government that emerges.

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43. Ethiopia will consider a Sadiq-led government as little better than its predecessor. Addis Ababa has long insisted that improved ties are dependent upon Khartoum's closing down facilities operated by northern Ethiopian dissidents, arresting the leadership of these movements, and cooperating with Addis Ababa's efforts to seal the border. It is unlikely that the new government will be able to meet such demands, but Ethiopian leader Mengistu will consider Khartoum's failure to do so as a sign of Sudanese duplicity. As a result, Ethiopia will continue its military and political support to the southern Sudanese insurgents led by Garang.

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44. Ethiopian support will be a key factor in enabling the SPLA insurgency to continue to flourish. Addis Ababa would view a Muslim-dominated government in Khartoum—civilian or military—with suspicion and hostility. It will continue to provide safe-haven, training, extensive supplies of arms, logistic support, and equipment to the rebels and make it possible for such Soviet surrogates as the Cubans and East Germans to continue to support the SPLA over

the next year. Should the civilian regime show signs of collapsing, Mengistu might well increase support to Garang's forces in the hope that they might be able to deal with Khartoum from a position of greater strength.

Prospective Scenarios

45. We believe there is an even chance that a Sadiq-led government will muddle through for almost a year but that there is a better-than-even chance that it will not remain in power much beyond that period. To survive, the government must make some visible progress in dealing with economic problems and the southern insurgency. The Sadiq government will also need to play the difficult game of nonalignment well enough to convince its opponents that it can attract a broad range of political, military, and economic support. Most important, however, will be its ability to retain the loyalty of the military, which has not relinquished its political role. The military will be closely watching the performance of the parliamentary government and will probably play a major role in shaping any successor government.

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The Short Term: The Civilian Government Remains in Power

46. The parliamentary government's liabilities will probably far outweigh any assets that could guarantee its survival much beyond a year. On the positive side, Sadiq's ambition, charisma, intelligence, and past experience as Prime Minister probably will make him Sudan's best qualified civilian politician to head the government. Khartoum's elites are eager to participate in a parliamentary democracy, and the Sudanese in general will probably give the new government several months to get organized before expecting any real change in the domestic situation. In addition, the fear that the Army will take over may temper northern opposition activities for a time. In the first few months the Army will be preoccupied not only with the insurgency and a possible major reorganization of its forces but also with consolidating its own leadership after the promised retirement of the senior officers on the Military Council after the elections.

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47. A Sadiq-led government will face major liabilities in maintaining itself in power, however:

- Few senior Army officers would remain loyal to Sadiq in a crisis and probably even fewer are committed to parliamentary democracy.
- The civilian intelligence capability has been severely weakened by purges and reorganization.

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- The national police force—many of whose members are drawn from non-Muslim or non-Arab minorities—would not be loyal or effective in containing widespread civil unrest.
- The parliamentary democracy will probably be ineffective because of factionalism and personal rivalries. []

48. Khartoum's new government will probably have only a brief respite from being the target of antiregime activities. There is a strong prospect that the labor strikes of the recent past will recur, as will clashes between leftist and Muslim students on university campuses. Ethnic and regional groups, especially Nubans and southerners disgruntled over the outcome of elections, may initiate sabotage activities in Khartoum. Increased economic and political tensions will probably trigger intercommunal violence. In addition, infighting among party factions could spill over into armed conflict on Khartoum's streets. Under these conditions, the effectiveness of Sudan's security forces and their loyalty to the civilian government would be questionable. []

49. In sum, we believe the Sadiq government will muddle through the first several months with its efforts to form a national government and its promises of ending the insurgency and improving the economy, but thereafter the new government will be increasingly vulnerable to removal by a coup. There is a strong likelihood that bickering and infighting among party leaders will cause parliamentary paralysis and political tensions that could lead to violence. As a result, Khartoum will have difficulties in making the necessary hard decisions on domestic problems. In such a climate, civil unrest over economic grievances would be probable, and successful negotiations that would end the insurgency would be unlikely. The evident instability and ineffective leadership would probably also make foreign donors less supportive. []

50. A less gloomy outcome would hinge on Sadiq's ability to make a southern settlement his government's top priority. Acutely aware of the threats to his political longevity, Sadiq will be likely to view rapid progress toward halting the insurgency as the one area in which creative leadership might tip the odds in his favor. He will have an opportunity during the first weeks of his government to demonstrate his break with the interim government's refusal to take Garang seriously. If Sadiq presses for a national conference, endorses a version of Islamic law that explicitly exempts non-Muslims, and embraces Garang's call for federalism, he might generate the momentum necessary for successful talks. If, instead, he moves more cautiously, he will quickly lose the initiative. []

The Longer Term: The Military Steps Back In

51. If, as expected, the government comes under critical attack from many quarters and seems unable to cope, there is a strong prospect that the Army will return to politics, possibly in a ruling coalition with civilians but most likely as a result of a coup. Although in 1958 Sudan's Prime Minister handed the reins of government to the military during a crisis, we believe Sadiq would be unlikely to resort to this precedent. Instead, Sadiq would probably try to ward off a coup by asking senior officers to enter a coalition with the civilian government. Such a civilian-military coalition would probably not improve decisionmaking or stability in the short run. We believe that eventually the Army would dominate or the government would be removed through a coup. []

52. Younger generals and senior middle-grade officers are the most likely candidates to lead a successful coup against the civilian government. Such officers pressured their seniors into removing Nimeiri last year. In addition, officers from this level have command over combat units large enough to stage a coup and to impose martial law. A seizure of power by junior officers is less likely and probably would come about only after a prolonged period of civil unrest and economic decline in which senior officers failed to take charge. Such a coup would be bloody and would need the external backing of Egypt, Libya, Ethiopia, or the Soviet Union in order to succeed. []

Alternative Outcomes

53. Two other outcomes might become increasingly likely over the longer term. On the one hand, in the event that northern ethnic and regional groups join the southern rebels in armed opposition to the new government, Khartoum might be pressured into meeting rebel demands leading to a federal system, new elections, and a complete restructuring of the political system. On the other hand, the central government's authority could deteriorate completely if party infighting immobilizes decisionmaking in Khartoum and the Army is too divided to mount a coup. We believe, however, that these outcomes are unlikely in the next year. []

Implications for the United States

Overview

54. Sudanese-US relations are not likely to improve significantly during the balance of 1986, and further strains are possible. []

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If the Civilian Government Remains

55. In the area of military cooperation, we expect the new government to continue the interim government's present pattern of requesting more military aid but refusing to host or participate with US forces in combined exercises. If the pre-positioned US military supplies at Port Sudan become a political issue, the civilian government might quietly press the United States for their removal. A lack of progress in resolving the southern insurgency will widen the gap between what the Sudanese armed forces need and what they receive from the United States and its allies. Additional Libyan military assistance to Sudan that is useful for counterinsurgency efforts will highlight this gap. []

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56. The new government initially will seek the accommodation with Ethiopia and insurgent leader Garang that has eluded the interim government, and such negotiations could jeopardize US-backed cross-border famine relief efforts for Eritrea and Tigray in northern Ethiopia. If the negotiations fail, as we expect, the Sudanese will probably seek increased US military assistance to combat the insurgency and covert military aid for Eritrean and Tigrean insurgents. Western failure to respond favorably would render Libyan aid offers more difficult to resist, despite their obvious costs in terms of relations with the United States and Egypt. A Sadiq government will seek military and economic aid from the Soviet Union, but Moscow will remain a target of suspicion. The Soviets will probably move very slowly in providing military aid because of their other regional equities. []

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57. US pressure for economic reform, both bilateral and multilateral, could harm Sudanese-US relations, but that is more likely to become a problem in 1987 than during the balance of this year. For at least several months after taking office, the new leaders will probably be distracted from economic issues by questions of political patronage and efforts to negotiate with southern insurgents. Implementation of economic reforms presupposes widespread Sudanese recognition that the long-term benefits outweigh the short-term costs. For the balance of the year, the new government and its supporters will be more likely to distrust donor-proposed reforms and pursue the general Sudanese preference for public-sector initiatives. As the new government will probably have a wider rural base than the former regimes, pressure may eventually mount to reverse public-sector initiatives that favor Khartoum at the expense of rural areas. []

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58. Cooperation between Sudan and the United States on the security of US personnel may improve under the new government, thereby reducing the threat to US personnel posed by Libyan and other terrorists. If, however, a Sadiq government includes numerous individuals with a benign view of Libya and the PLO and a malign view of the United States, cooperation may instead decline initially or until Libyan excesses provide a necessary corrective. The anticipated lack of cohesion and discipline in the new coalition government may well result in contradictory policies on cooperation with the United States between different ministers and security agencies. []

59. Sudanese-US political cooperation will probably remain much as it has been under the interim government. Khartoum's support for the Camp David accords will continue to wane, and Khartoum will also be less supportive of US policy in regional and international forums. Most Sudanese elites are more comfortable with the present moderate foreign policy of nonalignment than with Nimeiri's strong pro-Western tilt. Sadiq is aware of Mubarak's suspicions of his movement's historical opposition to Egypt and of his ties to Qadhafi and will seek to maintain good relations with Cairo as well as Tripoli. But Sadiq's confidence in his ability to manipulate Qadhafi may result in gestures Cairo will interpret as additional movement into Libya's orbit. []

If the Military Takes Power

60. A successor military government run by younger generals or senior middle-grade officers that takes charge in a crisis could provide Sudan with stability in the short run, especially if the officers are not closely linked to Nimeiri and have a secular approach. Such a government might be strong enough to make hard decisions on the economy and the south while relying on a cabinet of technical civilian experts. These officers would probably have greater incentive to end the war than most other groups in Sudan and might show greater unity and flexibility in negotiating an end to the insurgency than an elected government hobbled by infighting and the demands of its northern Muslim constituents. We doubt that insurgent leader Garang would move quickly to deal with a new military regime, however, no matter how conciliatory it appears. []

61. The military regime would initially find a nonaligned foreign policy useful in avoiding domestic criticism of foreign influence. Concern for ending the insurgency, however, would cause the regime to maintain rapprochement with Libya and to settle differences with Ethiopia, which probably would be more

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willing to reconcile with these officers than with a Muslim leader like Sadiq. Still, a military regime would remain wary of Libyan, Ethiopian, and Soviet subversion. Ties to Cairo could be warmer than under Sadiq, and relations with Riyadh would probably stay the same. []

62. At first the Sudanese-US relationship would not appear to be much different from that under Sadiq. The military regime would look for an increase in military and economic support from the United States and other traditional donors. If successful in acquiring US aid, the regime could over time quietly reaffirm strategic and greater political cooperation with the United States although it would never be as publicly forthcoming as the former Nimeiri regime. It would also be prepared to diminish ties to Libya and the USSR if US or other assistance bettered aid from those states. Some agreement might be possible on US prepositioning and military access rights although an agreement to renew Sudanese-US military exercises is not likely. []

63. A military takeover by conservative or Islamic fundamentalist officers would probably be challenged by some non-Muslim elements in the security forces as well as by leftists through strikes and street actions, and the new regime would probably be forced to take firm action in maintaining order. The newly awakened political parties would not take their removal quietly, and a military regime would probably be forced to suppress at least some of the parties and

detain at least some civilian political leaders. Such actions would be likely to provoke outcries in the West—and from the Soviet Bloc if the new regime had an anti-Communist orientation—and the United States would be faced with human rights considerations in its relations with the new regime. []

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64. In the unlikely event that junior officers on the religious right or the extreme left take power, US interests in Sudan and the region would be seriously damaged. Libya could easily enhance its influence under either type of government, but the Soviets and the Ethiopians would gain influence only in a coup by left-leaning junior officers. Egypt would be unlikely to tolerate a hostile regime of either sort. Possibly enlisting economic support from Saudi Arabia, Cairo would seek to engineer the overthrow of such a regime through Sudanese collaborators. []

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65. A federal system of government and restructuring of Sudan's political system pursuant to SPLA demands is unlikely in the next year but possible in the longer term. Such a government could create a more stable economic and political situation in Sudan that would benefit US interests and those of regional allies. The disintegration of Sudan reminiscent of Lebanon is even less likely within a year but possible in the longer term. In this worst case scenario, the stability of all countries bordering Sudan would be seriously affected and US interests in the region would suffer greatly. []

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ANNEX A

THE MILITARY BALANCE IN THE SOUTH

The SPLA

Led by former Sudanese Army Col. John Garang, a highly educated man and an adept tactician, the SPLA has grown from about 1,000 fighters in mid-1983 to a current strength estimated at 15,000 to 20,000, of which 14,000 are in Sudan at any given time. (See figure 2.) With a nucleus of capable, former Sudanese Army officers, many with advanced military training in the United States, the SPLA has successfully conducted operations against Army convoys and isolated garrisons, employing standard guerrilla hit-and-run tactics. By the beginning of 1985, it controlled much of the countryside in the south and had seized the military initiative. Major southern economic development projects were shut down, and road, rail, and river lines of communications with the north had been severed. []

The expansion of SPLA activities and recent insurgent military successes were made possible in large measure by increased Ethiopian assistance in 1985. The SPLA apparently received the resources necessary to conduct increased operations throughout southern Sudan, including the reported use of Ethiopian transport aircraft and helicopters. SPLA units in Sudan have been resupplied with large quantities of late-model, Soviet-manufactured infantry weapons such as new assault rifles, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and light air defense systems. With continued backing from Addis Ababa and support from Cuba and East Germany, the SPLA is expected to increase military operations throughout southern Sudan during the next several months, further isolating, and in some cases overrunning, Army garrisons. []

The Sudanese Armed Forces

The estimated 14,000 to 16,000 Sudanese Army troops deployed throughout the south have proved incapable

of stemming the advances of the SPLA. The Army's near-term strategy will probably be to withdraw troops from isolated posts that are difficult to reinforce and resupply—particularly during the rainy season—in order to consolidate its defensive posture in major garrison towns. []

The Army has long been plagued with severe operational deficiencies, resulting in a slow reaction to events in the south. During the tenure of former President Nimeiri, many competent, respected senior officers were replaced by ineffective officers owing their positions and fealty to him. Indecision by these officers and a lack of sufficient aviation assets to transport supplies and reinforcements and to conduct medical evacuation, or to provide reconnaissance and close air support missions, have hindered the Army's responsiveness. []

Logistic inadequacies, insufficient manpower, lack of coherent counterinsurgency doctrine, and poor intelligence have kept the Army from mounting effective offensive operations and protecting likely guerrilla targets. Also, northern officers cannot be sure of the loyalty of their southern troops, who make up about 40 percent of the enlisted men. Many southern garrisons have reported desperate conditions, with serious deficiencies in ammunition, rations, and medical supplies. Consequently, ethnic tensions and morale within the Army are growing problems. Desertion from southern garrisons facing rebel assaults has increased, and some northern soldiers and pilots have refused orders assigning them to the south. The growing morale problem and the inability of the Army adequately to resupply and reinforce key garrison towns threaten the government's entire position in the south []

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